Long-term Indo-Russian defence co-operation programme

325. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI RAGHAVJI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that existing defence co-operation programme between India and Russia would expire in the year 2000;

(b) whether it is a fact that finalisation of long-term Indo-Russian defence co-operation programme was discussed during the recent visit of Indian Defence Secretary to Russia; and

(c) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) India and Russia have agreed, in principle, to extend the existing long term programme of military technical co-operation between the two countries up to the year 2010. The draft agreement, which is expected to be signed in the near future, provides for a mechanism for implementing and monitoring the long-term programme of military technical co-operation between the two countries.

Dispute over army briefing to media

326. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a murmur between the defence bureaucracy and the three services over army briefing to media on Pakistani activities;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to resolve the matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The defence establishment has a Directorate of Public Relations (DPR) which, among other duties, has the responsibility of interfacing with the media. The DPR organisation has on its staff officers from all the branches of the Armed Forces. This existing institutionalised system is further supplemented by authorised briefings by qualified civilians and/or Armed Forces personnel.

Frequent firing by Pakistani troops at Siachen glacier

327. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL:
SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:
SHRI BANGARU LAXMAN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistani troops have been recently resorting to frequent firing at the Indian posts at Siachen glacier to capture the Indian posts;

(b) if so, the details thereof stating the number of attempts made by Pakistani troops to capture the Indian posts at Siachen glacier during the last two months or so;

(c) the number of casualties suffered by the Indian and Pakistani forces as a consequence thereof; and

(d) whether any talks have been held, if so, the level at which talks have been held and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Recently Pakistani troops intensified firing on Indian posts in Siachen region. They made 10 attempts to capture Indian posts during September, October and early November 1998. All the attempts were frustrated by our troops. Thirteen to fourteen Pak soldiers were reportedly killed. On our side one soldier was wounded.

(d) A meeting was held between the Defence Secretaries of India and Pakistan in New Delhi on 6th November 1998 in order to resolve the Siachen issue. The discussions were held in frank and cordial atmosphere. The two sides stated their